ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES

THE UGLY DUCKLING

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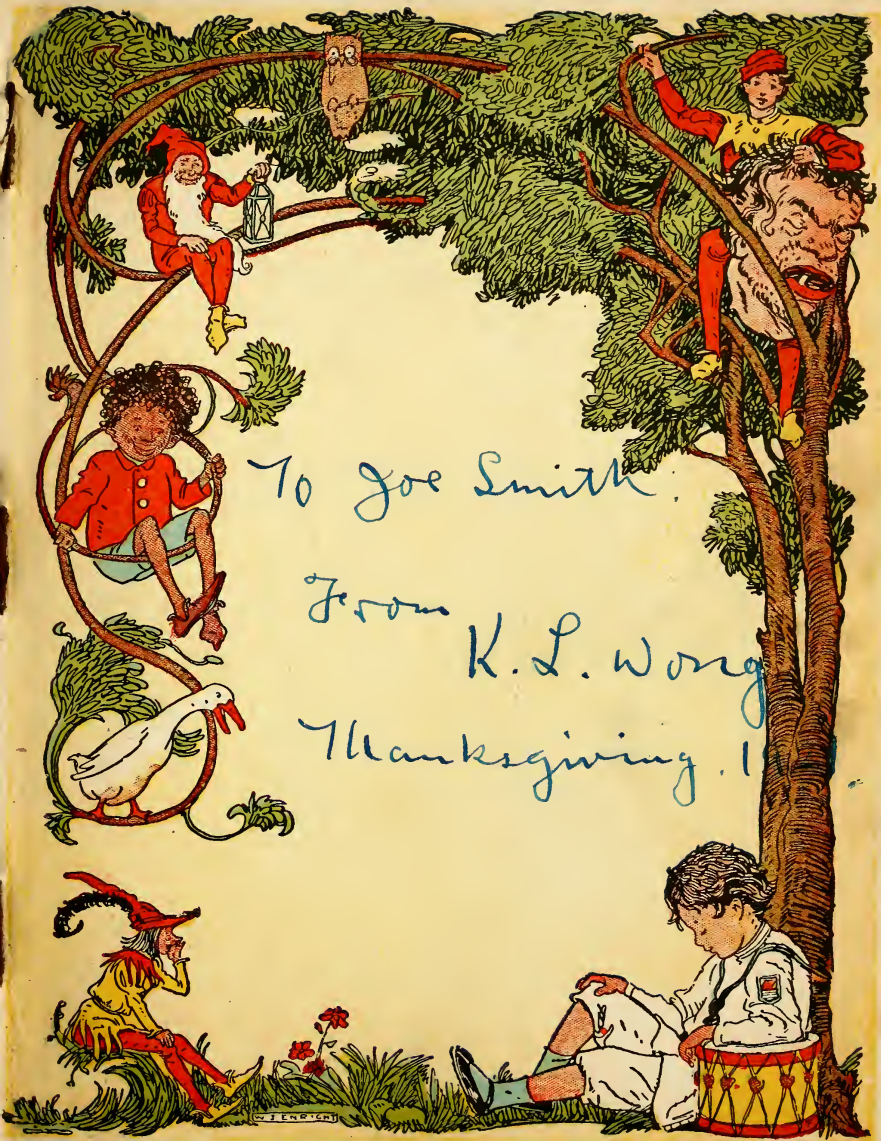
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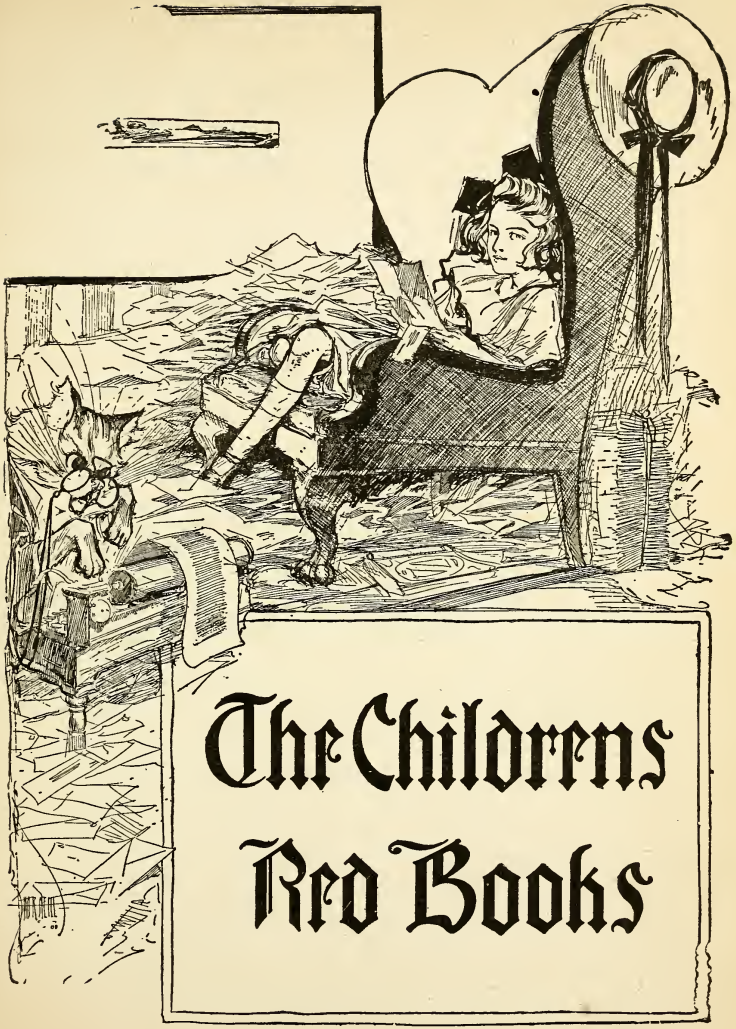

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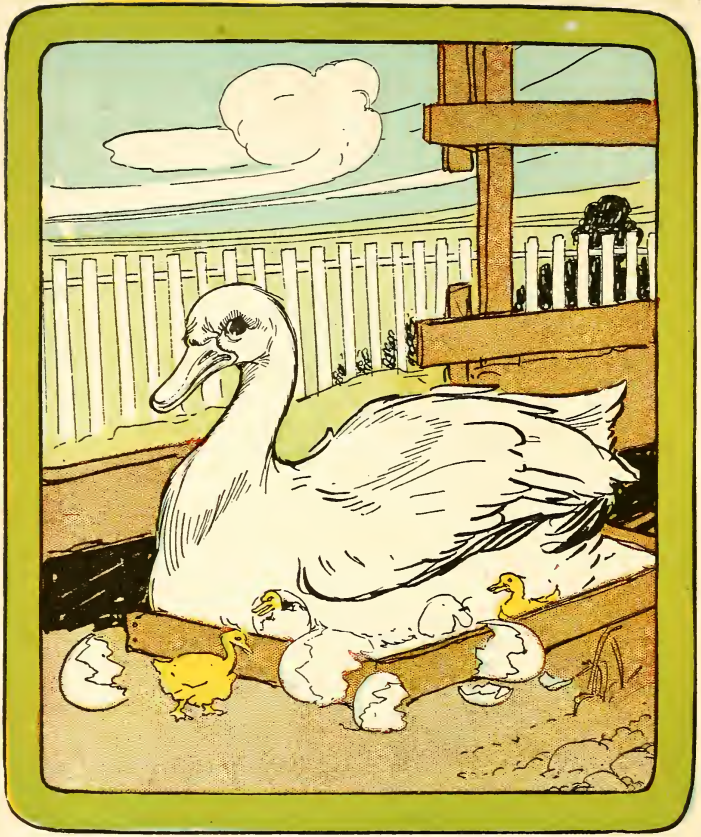

THE UGLY DUCKLING

from ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES

Pictured By

John R. Neill

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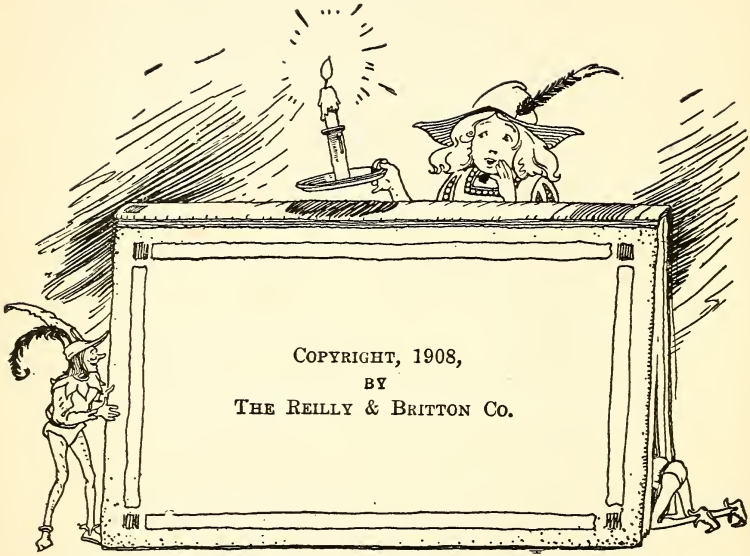
Chicago



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THE UGLY DUCKLING

BENEATH the branches of some burdock bushes, on the bank of a winding creek, sat an old duck on her nest hatching her young ones. By and by, one egg cracked, and then another. "Chick, chick, chick," was heard as the little heads peeped out of the shells, to be greeted with the "quack, quack" of the old mother duck.

"Are you all here, my dears?" she asked, as she arose from her nest. No, there lay the largest egg of all unhatched. She sat down again on the egg just as an old duck waddled up to call on her.

"How are you getting along?" she asked.

"They are all hatched but one, and it is so big it will not break," she replied.

"Depend upon it," said her visitor, "it is a turkey egg, and you'll have trouble, for turkeys can't swim."

The Ugly Duckling

At last the big egg broke. "Tweet, tweet," and out crept a young one, but so very big and ugly that the mother duck thought he must be a young turkey-cock.

"I shall soon see," she said to herself, "whether he is or not, when he goes into the water."

The next day she sprang into the creek with a splash, and one duckling after another sprang in after her. Even the big ugly one was swimming too, and beautifully.

"No turkey could swim like that," she thought.

"Quack, quack, come with me and I will take you to the barnyard so that all the chickens, ducks and turkeys may see you."

"Look there, how ugly that one duck is," said the ducks, and one flew at him.

"Let him alone," said the mother, "he is doing no harm."

The poor ugly duckling who had been the last to leave his shell was beaten and pushed and made a fool of by the hens as

well as the ducks. Even the turkey-cock puffed himself up and swooped down on him, gobbling and getting red in the face. The poor duckling was very unhappy, and every day things grew worse and worse for him. He was even chased about by his sisters, who said:

"I wish the cat would catch you!"

The ducks bit him, the hens beat him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him away with her foot. So he ran away and flew over the hedge. Even the lit-

tle birds who saw him were frightened, and he thought it was because he was so ugly. The poor duckling, however, closed his eyes and ran away faster and faster until he came to a great meadow.

He lay down in the reeds until morning, when three wild geese came by.

"You are ugly, but we like you. Come with us," they said to him. Just at that moment bang! bang! went a gun, and the three geese fell down dead. Bang! bang! and all the other wild geese in the meadow

flew up. The huntsmen were lying all around the meadow hiding in the reeds.

What a fright the poor duckling was in, especially when a big dog ran up with his tongue hanging out of his mouth. He showed his sharp teeth, but happily he turned away from the duckling.

"Oh, I'm glad I am so ugly, for even a dog will not bite me," said the duckling, and he lay still until the bullets of the huntsmen no more whistled through the reeds, and then hurried away as fast as he could.

In the evening he reached a little hut all tumbled down and dirty. He crept through the half-open door into a dark little room where an old woman sat. She lived here alone with her tom-cat and pet hen. The cat she called her little son. He purred and put up his back if you rubbed him from his head to his tail, but sparks flew if you rubbed him the other way. The hen had short legs, so they called her "Chickling Short-legs."

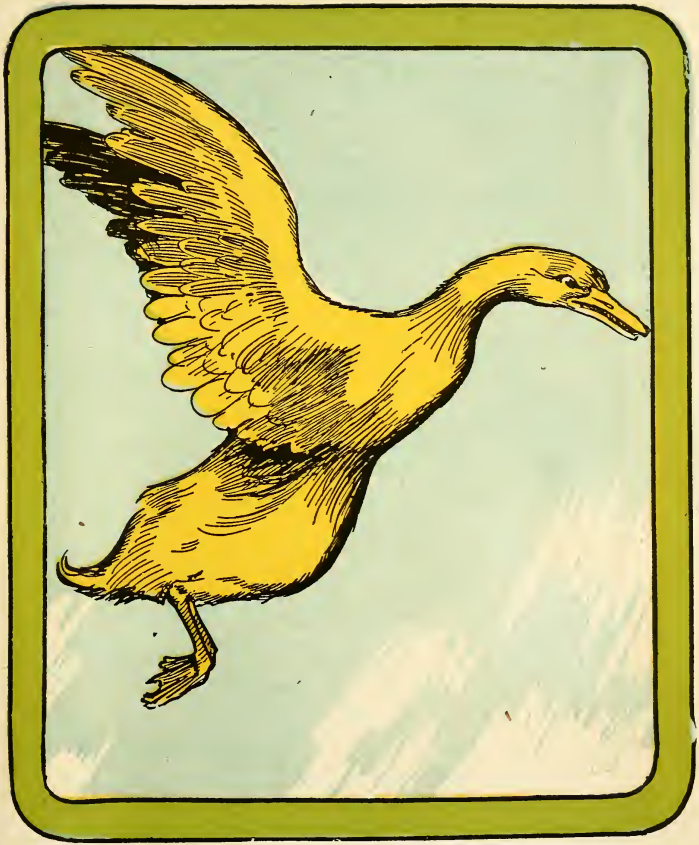
In the morning when they saw the duck-

ling Tom began to purr and the hen to cluck.

"What is the matter?" said the woman, for she could not see well, and thought the duckling was a fat duck that had lost her way.

"Oh, that is a fine catch," said she when Tom told her. "Now, we can have all the duck eggs we want to eat."

The duckling, for so they thought he was, stayed all winter with the old woman and her cat and hen; but one fine day in the springtime, longing for a nice



swim in the water, he went down to the brook and swam far away from the home of the old woman and her pets. But in the autumn when it grew very cold, the poor duckling had a bad time. One morning he saw a flock of beautiful swans come out of a thicket nearby, and a feeling came over the poor ugly duckling that he loved those beautiful white birds as he had never loved anything before. Ah! how he longed to go with them, but he felt ashamed even to let them see how

ugly he was, and while he was thinking this away they flew without seeing him.

The winter came, and it was so cold that he had to swim about to keep from freezing. The pond froze over all except one small opening in the ice where he swam around. But this grew smaller and smaller and finally the duckling was frozen fast in the ice, and there the next morning a man found him and carried him home. The children wanted to play with him, but the duckling thought they were

going to hurt him, and in his terror, he jumped right into the milk pail. The farmer's wife clapped her hands, and the children laughed and screamed, and knocked each other down trying to catch him. The duckling flew out of the open door.

He had a bad time after that all winter long, and how he lived through the cold winter nobody knows. At last the warm spring came, and much to his surprise, the duckling found that his wings

were so strong that he could fly swiftly through the air with ease.

One day he flew into a beautiful large garden. There swimming around on a lake, he saw the graceful white swans he had seen before, and whom he loved so much. He was very sad, though, when he saw these beautiful creatures, for he thought of himself as very ugly.

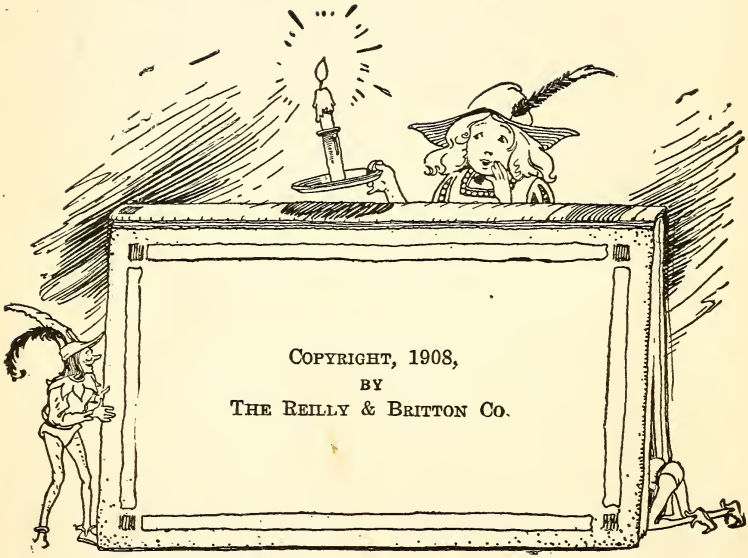
"Better be killed by them," he thought, "than be beaten by ducks, hens, women and children." So he flew into the water

and swam toward the beautiful white swans.

"Only kill me," said the poor creature, and he bowed his head on a level with the water. But what did he see in the clear water? Beneath him, as if in a looking-glass, he saw his own image. No longer was he a dark gray, ugly bird. He had grown to be a beautiful white swan!

He was glad now, for he knew that all his sufferings were over. So he shook his feathers, and stretched his slender graceful neck, and was happy ever after.

RIP VAN WINKLE



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RIP VAN WINKLE

MANY years ago, in a small village in the Catskill mountains, there lived a simple, good-natured fellow, named Rip Van Winkle. All the children of the village loved Rip, and nothing pleased him more than to fly kites and shoot marbles with them. Rip loved to fish and hunt, too. He would tramp miles through the woods with a gun on his shoulder. But

while Rip spent his days in this way, the fences on his farm were all falling down, his place was going to rack and ruin and his children were dressed in rags.

He was happy. In fact, he would rather starve than work. When his wife told him how idle and careless he was, Rip shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes and said nothing.

Rip had a dog, called Schneider, whom he loved dearly, but Mrs. Van Winkle disliked Schneider, for she said he was lazy and good for nothing, too.

He would often say to Schneider:

"Poor old man, Mrs. Van Winkle leads you truly a dog's life at home; but never mind, I will always stand by you."

Schneider would wag his tail and look into his master's face as if he understood.

One day Rip took his gun and started off with Schneider into the mountains. He thought if he shot some squirrels and took them home to his wife they would put her in a good humor. After walking a long way, he lay down to rest, and while he lay musing he heard afar off voices calling, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"

He sat up and looked around, but seeing nothing, he thought he was dreaming. He had hardly started homeward when he heard again:

"Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"

Schneider wrinkled up his back, growled and skulked up to his master.

Rip saw down in the glen a strange little figure, slowly toiling up the rocks. The figure was that of a strange little man, with thick, bushy hair and grizzled beard. As he came nearer, Rip saw that he carried on his shoulder a keg. When he saw Rip,

he asked him to help him with his load. Rip, always willing to help any one, took the keg and followed this queer little figure up a narrow gully.

During all their long climb, Rip and his companion spoke not a word. At last they reached the top of the mountains, and there, on a level spot, were a number of odd-looking little men playing ninepins. No two were dressed alike, but every one had a knife in his belt. One had a long head, with a broad face, and small, piggish eyes. Another seemed to be all nose, and

wore a big, white hat, with a long, red cock's tail coming out of it.

One of them, who seemed to be the commander, was old and fat. He was dressed in green, and he wore a high-crowned hat, red stockings and black shoes, with rosettes on them.

As Rip and his companion came upon them, they all stopped playing and stared at Rip. His knees knocked together with fright. They ran to Rip, took the keg, and all began to drink in turn from it. They then offered it to Rip, who, in fear

and trembling, took a drink. All this time not a word was spoken.

By and by, Rip grew bolder and took another, and still another, drink from the keg, for he found it the very best thing he had ever tasted. But soon his eyes began to swim and his head fell forward in deep sleep.

When Rip awoke, the sun was shining bright. He rubbed his eyes and said to himself, "I must have slept all night." Slowly the memory of the strange little men and the wine keg came back to him.

"Oh! that wine! That wicked wine!" cried Rip. "What shall I say to my wife?"

He looked around for his gun, but there in its place was an old one, all rusty and falling apart. He thought that the queer little men had stolen his good gun, and, as a joke, had put the old one in its place. Schneider, too, had gone. He whistled for Schneider and shouted his name, but still he did not come. He rose to walk, but "Oh! oh!" he cried, with pain in his limbs. "This sleeping out of doors does not agree with me. I seem to be old."

He was so stiff that he could hardly get through the thickets and branches.

He felt very hungry, too, and weak, and, though he dreaded to meet his wife, he felt he must go on or starve among the mountains. When he reached the village, he saw many people, but none he had ever seen before. They all stared at him with surprise, and the children pointed at his long, white beard.

Everything seemed strange, and, strangest of all, he appeared like an old man.

Poor Rip was very much worried, and

said to himself, "That drink last night has addled my poor head."

With difficulty, he found his way to his own house, expecting every moment to hear the voice of his scolding wife. But no, all was quiet.

A poor, half-starved dog lay by the house. It looked like Schneider, and Rip called him by name, but he only showed his teeth and passed by.

"My dog has forgotten me," thought Rip.

He went up to the house, but it was

empty. He called aloud for his wife and children, but all was silence. He then, with fear in his heart, turned his poor, tottering steps to the village street again.

He had just strength enough left to get to the old tavern, and here some men, hearing the noise of the children who followed him, came out to see what was the matter. To their surprise, they saw a ragged old man, with a long, white beard, carrying a rusty old gun in his hand.

"Who are you, and whence came you?" they asked him.

"I am Rip Van Winkle," he said.

At this they all laughed, and one man said:

"Why, it is twenty years since Rip Van Winkle left here. He went away from home with his gun, and has never been heard of since. His dog came home without him, but whether he shot himself or was carried away by the Indians, no one can tell. His wife has been dead these ten years back. Why, old man, you must be dreaming?"

"No, I am not dreaming," said Rip. "I

was young Rip Van Winkle once. Now I am old Rip Van Winkle. Does nobody know me?"

Just at this moment a woman, tottering out among them, put her hand to her brow and, peering into his face, said:

"Sure enough, it is Rip Van Winkle himself. Why, where have you been these twenty years?"

Rip's story was soon told. He had slept on the mountains twenty years!

To this day, when the people in the Catskill mountains hear thunder, they say it is little mountain men playing ninepins.

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